

Governance Support Available for Community Groups in Fort Augustus, Glenmoriston and Glengarry

1. Highland Third Sector Interface (HTSI) Good Governance Toolkit

The Highland Third Sector Interface (HTSI), based in Dingwall, offers [a free online Good Governance Toolkit](#). This is a self-guided resource available to any group across Highland without the need for registration or login. It is organised into six sections:

- Starting My Organisation: pre-steps and legal structures
- Managing My Organisation Well: governance, planning, policies, legislation, risk, finance, and marketing
- Involving People: marketing and community engagement
- Managing and Supporting People: recruitment, staff policies, volunteers, safeguarding, PVG, and training
- Funding My Organisation: applying for grants, trading, procurement, fundraising, community shares, and reporting to funders
- When Things Go Wrong: conflict resolution, grievance procedures, managing complaints, and winding up an organisation

The toolkit is freely accessible online and is a starting point for any community group at any stage of development. One-to-one support is also available from the HTSI Third Sector Interface (TSI) Services team (TSIservices@highlandtsi.org.uk). Direct delivery from Dingwall covers the Inner Moray Firth and Wester Ross areas which includes the Beinneun fund area, though groups in Fort Augustus and Glengarry often access services within the Lochaber area, which is served by HTSI's local delivery partner, Voluntary Action Lochaber (VAL)

2. Voluntary Action Lochaber (VAL)

For groups in Fort Augustus, Glenmoriston and Glengarry, the most relevant local point of contact for governance support is Voluntary Action Lochaber (VAL), based in Fort William. VAL is a delivery agent of HTSI and the local TSI partner for the Lochaber area. Its services include:

- Support and guidance on setting up new organisations
- Governance support and advice, including access to the Good Governance Health Check
- Funding advice and support
- Independent examinations of accounts
- Bookkeeping, payroll, and management accountancy services
- Volunteer development support
- Training and learning resources
- Conference and meeting room facilities

VAL's Governance Good Practice page also signposts key national resources including the SCVO Governance Checkup, the Scottish Governance Code, and https://governancewiki.org.uk/wiki/Welcome_to_GovernanceWiki! — a free open resource for voluntary organisations in Scotland. VAL can be contacted via valochaber.org/

3. SCVO Good Governance Resources

The Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) provides a national Good Governance section at [SCVO Governance](#). This is a broader, more structured resource, aimed primarily at trustees and boards of established organisations. It includes:

- The Scottish Governance Code — the national statement of best practice for the voluntary sector
- A Good Governance Checkup — an interactive self-assessment tool with a personalised action plan
- Guidance on trustee roles and responsibilities, including personal liability
- Advice on trustee recruitment and induction
- Guidance on running effective meetings and codes of conduct
- Resources on developing your board through training and review
- Information on managing risks and problems
- A mediation support service for organisations experiencing conflict
- Trustee Essentials — practical information tailored to board members
- Guidance and templates to support good practice
- A jargon buster explaining common governance terms
- Access to the SCVO Governance Network — a peer support community for trustees across Scotland

SCVO's resources are largely freely accessible without an account, though some content and member benefits require registration. There is no charge for a basic account.

4. Just Enterprise (Impact Hub Inverness)

Impact Hub Inverness delivers the Scottish Government's Just Enterprise contract, providing free specialist business consultancy to established social enterprises across the Highlands and Islands, Moray, and Aberdeenshire. Support is available to social enterprises and enterprising charities and covers:

- Strategic, business, and financial planning — including vision and goal setting, business plan writing and review, assessment of future business ideas, funding and finance, cashflow projections, and income generation
- Governance — including legal structures, building enterprising boards, charitable trading, and acquiring and developing an asset
- Marketing — including marketing plans, SEO and website support, social media, market research, and review of current marketing activity
- Crisis review and business recovery
- Social impact assessment

Support is accessed by applying through <https://justenterprise.org/> or by contacting Impact Hub Inverness directly at <https://inverness.impacthub.net/just-enterprise> to discuss requirements before applying. *Please note – Just Enterprise has just had its funding cut for the next financial year.*

5. Development Trusts Association Scotland (DTAS)

The Development Trusts Association Scotland is a membership organisation that supports community-led development trusts across Scotland, and governance support sits at the heart of what it offers. Dedicated Development Officers provide advice and support throughout a community organisation's journey — from start-up onwards — covering governance, business planning, finance, HR, and other operational issues, accessible by phone, email, video, or face to face.

For organisations in difficulty, DTAS introduced a crisis and resilience service in 2023 to help members facing serious governance problems, financial pressures, or difficulties arising from managing a community asset, connecting them with a specialist Development Officer and relevant expert advice. Governance support is also built into DTAS's capacity-building offer, which includes strategy sessions, organisational reviews, and board training sessions, alongside access to a wide range of publications and toolkits covering best practice. Support is primarily available to members, though DTAS also provides one-to-one support for community organisations aspiring to become development trusts, including a start-up toolkit with templates, factsheets, and guidance. Membership-based support services are included within the cost of membership, and DTAS also administers funding programmes — including the Scottish Government-funded Strengthening Communities Programme — that can help organisations build longer-term capacity.

DTAS can be contacted at dtascot.org.uk or on 0131 220 2456.

DTAS Recovery and Resilience Fund

Here is a summary in third-person UK English:

A £5 million funding programme for Recovery and Resilience, developed exclusively for DTAS members made possible through finance provided by **Foundation Scotland**. The programme aims to help member organisations recover from periods of crisis and build long-term resilience, with grants available ranging from £10,000 to £100,000.

The fund has three core purposes: to proactively support the recovery and long-term resilience of DTAS members; to help them gain stability, build capacity and future-proof their operations; and to prevent members from escalating into crisis. The fund is open only to Provisional and Full DTAS members and is expected to remain open for two years and opened in Autumn 2025.

<https://dtascot.org.uk/funding-programmes/>

6. Plunkett UK

Plunkett UK is a national charity that supports people in rural areas to set up and run businesses in community ownership. It provides business advice to all types of community business — defined as any business that trades for community benefit and is democratically owned and controlled by the local community — at all stages of development, from initial idea to established trading. Support available includes:

- Telephone helpline support, Monday to Friday, on 01993 630022
- Advice and guidance on legal structures, including assistance with establishing a Community Benefit Society using Plunkett UK model rules
- Access to small and large-scale learning and information events
- Online and face-to-face events, training, and networking opportunities
- Resources and templates
- Enhanced support for Community Business members, including an annual business health check and one-to-one specialist advice, access to a library of best practice guides and template documents, free or discounted events and training, a 20% discount on Plunkett consultancy services, and support to update model rules
- Paid-for consultancy services (with discounts for members) for groups ineligible for funded support

Plunkett UK is accessible via <https://plunkett.co.uk/> or info@plunkett.co.uk. Groups can check their eligibility for funded support through the signposting tool on the website.

7. GovernanceWiki!

GovernanceWiki is a free online resource for voluntary organisations, community groups, and social enterprises operating in Scotland, and for advisers working with them. Developed by Midlothian Community Action in collaboration with third sector experts and supported by Third Sector Interfaces across Scotland, it launched during Small Charities Week 2025 with funding from the Tyne-Esk Community Led Local Development Fund.

The Wiki provides accessible, up-to-date guidance on a wide range of governance topics, including legal obligations, board roles and responsibilities, compliance, and risk management, and links and signposts to trusted external resources including those from SCVO and Evaluation Support Scotland. It is designed to be straightforward to navigate, is accessible on mobile devices, and includes a search function. It is particularly suited to smaller or volunteer-led organisations.

GovernanceWiki can be accessed at:

[https://governancewiki.org.uk/wiki/Welcome to GovernanceWiki!](https://governancewiki.org.uk/wiki/Welcome_to_GovernanceWiki!)

8. Support for Unincorporated Groups

For informal community groups many funding streams and formal support mechanisms require a group to be constituted and have a committee structure. However, HTSI, VAL and Plunkett both explicitly offer support to unincorporated groups at this pre-constitution stage. Plunkett's advice is specific to community owned/ run business that trades for community benefit, is democratically owned and controlled by the local community. HTSI can help groups become constituted or identify local partners to work alongside them and can provide small capacity-building grants in some circumstances. This is an important gateway step for groups wishing to access wider governance support and funding.

Accessibility of Resources

The HTSI Good Governance Toolkit is fully open access — no login or membership is required and it can be used by any group at any stage.

VAL's support is available free of charge to community groups across the Lochaber area, including Fort Augustus, Glenmoriston and Glengarry. SCVO's resources are also largely free, though some elements sit behind a registration requirement. Just Enterprise support is free to eligible social enterprises and enterprising charities. The local contact is Inverness Impact Hub <https://inverness.impacthub.net/just-enterprise> with applications made through <https://justenterprise.org/>. Just enterprise offers free funded support to eligible groups, with paid consultancy available to others; membership is available to trading community businesses at an annual fee.

Summary of Key Contacts

Organisation	What They Offer	Contact
HTSI Good Governance Toolkit	Free self-guided online resource covering all governance topics	highlandtsi.org.uk/good-governance-home
HTSI TSI Services	One-to-one support, health check, referrals to local partners	TSIservices@highlandtsi.org.uk
Voluntary Action Lochaber (VAL)	Local delivery partner for Lochaber area incl. Fort Augustus and Glengarry	https://www.valochaber.org/
SCVO	National resources, governance code, checkup tool, trustee network	scvo.scot/support/running-your-organisation/governance
Just Enterprise (Impact Hub Inverness)	Free specialist business consultancy for social enterprises in the Highlands and Islands	https://inverness.impacthub.net/just-enterprise https://justenterprise.org/
Development Trusts Association Scotland	Governance support to members across Scotland.	https://dtascot.org.uk/ https://dtascot.org.uk/funding-programmes/
Plunkett UK	Business advice, legal structures, training and membership support for community-owned businesses	https://plunkett.co.uk/

All resources listed above are free to access unless otherwise stated. HTSI membership is free for all third sector organisations in Highland.